

## **Macbeth Act 2**

### **Homework Questions**

Remember to answer your questions with quotations and analysis from the play. When I check homework questions, I'm looking for quality! Continue to **read the play out loud** at home and come to class with questions and comments.

#### **Act 2, Scene 2: Choose two questions.**

Reread Scene 2 before you answer the questions. Read it **out loud**.

1. In Scene 1, Macbeth "sees" a dagger. In Scene 2, he hears things. Lady Macbeth says to him, "These deeds must not be thought / After these ways; so, it will make us mad" (2.2.45-46). Why does she make this comment to Macbeth? Cite specific comments Macbeth or she make that might cause some concern.
2. Nobody can be 100% sure who the two sleepers are that Macbeth overhears. Are the two sleepers the two grooms or Donalbain and Malcolm. Look closely at lines 30-35 and think of two or three reasons to justify your choice of the servants or the king's sons—or some other pair.
3. At the end of the scene, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth make some interesting comments. Do you think Macbeth regrets his actions? Lady Macbeth? Use quotations to support your answer.
4. Shakespeare does not show the death of Duncan. If you filmed the movie, would you show it or would you follow the play? Explain your reasons with evidence from the play.

#### **Act 2, Scene 3: Choose two questions.**

Reread Scene 3 before you answer the questions. Read it **out loud**.

1. Some productions cut the 'Porter Scene' altogether, on the grounds that it is not by Shakespeare. The Cambridge School Shakespeare edition identifies some arguments for including the scene:
  - Comic relief. The audience needs a space for laughter.
  - Time to change. The Macbeth's need time to change into nightgowns.
  - A link with older plays. In medieval miracle plays a porter at Hell's mouth admitted sinners to the torments of Hell (everlasting bonfire).
  - Giving a job to the comedian. Shakespeare's company, the King's Men, always included one major actor who specialized in comic parts.
  - Contemporary jokes. The Porter's jokes could be about things that were very familiar to audiences in 1606, the year the play was first performed: greedy farmers, equivocators (someone who juggles with the truth), cheating tailors, and drunken carousing.
  - A commentary on the themes of the play. Damnation, evil and the supernatural, ambition, lying and deceit, theft, desire and achievement.

What do you think? Keeping these arguments in mind, what is your argument for keeping or deleting the scene?

2. Lennox hears similar things to Macbeth in Scene 2. What does Lennox hear? Analyze his statement.
3. Macbeth's two longer speeches (2.3.107-112 and 2.3.127-37) raise interesting questions about how language can hide truth as well as reveal it. Read both speeches out loud several times. Does Macbeth sound sincere or insincere?
4. Malcolm and Donalbain don't wish to "consort" (2.3.160) with the other thanes, and they decide to leave. Do you think they make the most sensible decision? Compile as many reasons as you can for and against their decision to flee.

**Act 2, Scene 4: Do both questions.**

Reread Scene 4 before you answer the questions. Read it out loud.

1. Ross and an Old Man talk about the darkness and unnaturalness of events that mirror Duncan's murder. Make a list of the images they discuss.
2. Consider the Old Man as a character who has grown old under the rule of the feuding war-lords of Scotland. Write his autobiography, using lines 1-4 as your inspiration. Remember, he's spent his long life in an embattled military society.